

**NAMING PRACTICES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO XITSONGA
PERSONAL NAMES: AN ONOMASTIC ANALYSIS**

By

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DECLARATION

I, **Famandha Reckson Baloyi** hereby declare that the work in this mini-dissertation (naming practices with special reference to Xitsonga personal names: an onomastic analysis) submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree of Master of Arts in African Languages in the Faculty of Humanities, School of Languages and Communication Studies, is my own work and has not been submitted to any university before for any other degree or examination whatsoever. All sources used or quoted in this work have been indicated and acknowledged in the references.



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03/7/2015
DATE

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was conducted to investigate the implications and challenges experienced by the Vatsonga in Hlanganani region at Vhembe District in Limpopo Province and the entire Vatsonga of Southern Africa in naming practices.

A purposive sample was conducted wherein 26 respondents, that is, amongst traditional leaders, teachers of the language, pastors, traditional healers and parents were interviewed on the challenges encountered from day to day practices of naming among the Vatsonga. Data were collected using two methods namely: content analysis and systematic coding through unstructured interviews and questions. The study reveals how some of the Vatsonga lost their identity and adopted those of the sister tribes as a form of refuge and new identity. It is reflected in the study how the Vatsonga assimilated some of the Vhavenda and Bapedi ceremonies such as: **Vukhomba, Misevetho and Madlala (ngoma)**.

The research has demonstrated that **Nguni** and **Vatsonga** cultures share similar strategies in verbal exposition in creating new personal names which is also reflective of their socio-political environment.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Names mean more than what is represented by words. Among the African people names and the naming process are socio-culturally bound (Guma, 2001:265). This can be illustrated through the interpretation of the historical events of South Africa.

This research will depict how repression and the social injustices of the past contributed to the changing of names and surnames in the Xitsonga language.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the problems pertaining to naming emanated from the time when the missionaries introduced Western education in the country. The missionaries could not accept the native names because most of the names were family names. They associated family names with evil spirits as most of the names were linked to ancestors. For example:

(a) *Ndavani* (news maker) or *Nyavani* (finisher or child bearer)

The school system also played a big role in the changing of names among the Vatsonga: for instance, if a child was named **Ndhuvazi** (*they do not know*) or **Yandeya** (*to become a bride*), the teacher would simply bestow a Western name on him or her, and the child would end up with a name such as **Joseph** or **Mary**. He or she was given a Western or Christian name as the African names were not well received.

This phenomenon was also inculcated during the apartheid period in South Africa (1949-1994) when politicians had to be disguised from their assailants by adopting a new name attached to a pseudo surname. For instance, **Nelson Mandela** camouflaged his name with the pseudo name and surname **David Motsamayi** (Harries, 2011:5).

The change of names and surnames was also influenced or informed by non-speakers of the language. There are many names and surnames that are misspelt as a result of this as illustrated below:

Incorrect spelling		correct spelling
Kgobane	>	Khubani
Mosesenyane	>	Misisinyani
Lebese	>	Rivisi
Baloyi	>	Valoyi
Rekgotso	>	Rikhotso

The above presentation shows that the change of names and surnames is a common occurrence in Xitsonga, and therefore, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study on this phenomenon.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to examine the causes of the changes of names and surnames in Xitsonga. In order to achieve this aim, the study will attempt to answer these questions:

- What are the causes of name and surname changes among the Vatsonga?
- What are the effects of a name and surname changes among the Vatsonga?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the cause of name and surname changes among the Vatsonga.
- To determine the effects of name and surname changes among the Vatsonga.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method that underpins this study is the qualitative method. This method is apt because it will assist the researcher to find out how and why Xitsonga names and surnames change.

1.5.1 Data collection methods

1.5.1.1 Primary sources

Two different tools will be used in the data collection from primary sources: **unstructured questions and interviews**. Although random sampling will be used, the study will depend on the following respondents:

- 5 Traditional leaders;
- 5 Pastors;
- 5 Teachers;
- 5 Traditional healers; and
- 6 Parents (3 men and 3 women).

The above-mentioned respondents are relevant because in most instances they are the ones who bestow names on children.

The interview schedule will pose questions such as the following:

- What are the implications of changing names?
- Is it necessary to change names?
- What are the consequences of using matriarchal surnames?

1.5.1.2 Secondary sources

These are documents or data collected by experts and other researchers. The main purpose is to focus on the relevant data that has been collected by other scholars. Information will be acquired from various sources such as journals, dissertations, articles and books.

1.5.2 Data analysis

Data analysis will depend on two instruments, that is, content analysis and systematic coding. Content analysis is relevant because it “identifies and summarises message content” (Maree, 2012:101).

Coding analysis will be useful in this study because it is “the process of reading carefully through your transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytically units... coding is therefore defined as marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying names” (Maree, 2012: 101).

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study will adhere to ethical considerations that are necessary in this case. Respondents will take part in this study on a voluntary basis. Confidentiality will also be maintained by not revealing the names of the respondents. Lastly, respondents will have the right to withdraw from the study if they so wish.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

An investigation of personal names, surnames, family names and naming practices will deepen our insight of the Vatsonga heritage and culture. It will also assist us to comprehend the conceptualisation behind their naming practices and why such names are designated and utilised.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we review literature of authors who have dealt with and blown a horn to highlight the problem and challenges faced by Africans and in particular the Vatsonga when bestowing names to people.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1 Mpande (2006)

According to Mpande (2006:104) the question: **What is in a name?** Depends on the particular culture from which it is framed. Among many African cultures, a name tells a lot about the individual. A name may indicate the linguistic structures and phonological processes found in the language, the position of the name's bearer in society, and the collective history and life experiences of the people surrounding the individual. African cultures have various ways of naming a child, ranging from the Akan naming system to the Egyptian cosmic one.

Mpande further states that slavery, colonialism, and globalization have all contributed to the exportation of the African systems of naming into the African Diaspora. Among the various endeavours that African slaves made in becoming African American in culture, it involved the process of renaming themselves, constantly reverting back to their African cultural forms, such as spirituality, burial rites, naming for inspiration and guidance, and thus reasserting themselves and reaffirming their humanity in a hostile world.

2.2.2 Dickens (1985)

Dickens investigates Western influence on the Zulu personal naming system. According to Dickens (1985:19), the earlier Zulus lived a tribal life because the earlier Zulus were a community for whom personal naming was bound by tradition to a very high degree. This implies that tradition played a crucial role in giving a child a name, for an example: a child would be given the name **Musindo** (meaning what is all about this hullabaloo) to signify the squabbles in the family.

Dickens (1985:22) further states that Zulu names given before 1840 were chosen according to traditional naming conventions:

Their view of life was a “collectivistic” one ... in which “group responsibility” superseded the individual or the wellbeing of the members of the tribe. The traditional pre-western Zulu belonged to a society in which the traditional group was a meaningful entity and personal obligation was not recognized since it would have been in conflict with the cultural stability and group solidarity.

This means that Western influence on the Zulu personal naming system was reflected in a movement away from the carefully structured Zulu names and the adoption of Western original names. Before the arrival of the missionaries, Zulu names reflected a synoptic history of the circumstances related to the birth, the family's attitude to the birth, the place where the child was born, the time the child was born, the parents' wishes for the child and the country's situation at the time of the child's birth or the clan into which the child was born.

2.2.3 Ogie (2002)

According to Ogie (2002:1), naming is a carefully planned event. The choice of a name for a child, a prospective title – taking an initiate, a new bride, is a very careful exercise which indeed requires some divination. In this regard, Ogie (2002:1) asserts:

In traditional African societies, personal names are not just arbitrarily concatenated words but rather words that reflect the world- view of the people. World view is defined in this paper as the beliefs and thoughts (conceptions, ideas, opinions) about the world and human life within the world.

Ogie also disputes Shakespeare's thesis that there is nothing in a name. Ogie asserts that this is a false expression in the African context as African people attach great significance to the meaning of names as it is believed that the name given to an individual will determine his or her fate. He said that this is reflected in the Edo proverb: “*eke ne a he eni ghe ere eni la ghe*” that implies that a person is a reflection of his or her name.

2.2.4 Guma (2001)

Names have more meaning than what they represent in words. Names can also predict the future of an individual. Guma (2001:265) concurs with this by alluding that “names embody individual social experiences, social norms and values, status, roles and authority as well as personality and individual attributes”.

Furthermore, Guma (2001: 265) says:

Names are more than a ‘word’ or words by which a person, animal, place or thing is known, and does not fundamentally connote designation, reputation, or identification, separation of one individual from the other *per se*. Among Basotho in the southern Africa ‘Names’ and the naming process is a socio-cultural interpretation of historical events. They embody individual or group social experiences, social norms and values, status roles and authority, as well as personality and individual attributes. It is argued that the concepts of ‘person’ and ‘self’ among Southern African societies have to be understood as historical social products.

It is therefore the contention of Guma that names and surnames are more than mere words with the deeper meaning. Guma (2001:265) correctly points out that “names are believed to have influence on the character of the name bearer.”

2.2.5 Faubion (2001)

Faubion (2001:88) shows the importance of identity that is expressed by a name as follows:

When an adopted person, especially an adult who knows about his or her situation, is given a last name, this is more of identification than a means of establishing or claiming an identity through lineage, a genealogical tree,... it is a name and will remain a name only, an empty shell that cannot establish the other intricate means of identification and belonging.

In some circumstances as far as Faubion (2001) is concerned, when a child is given a matriarchal surname, the likelihood is that the child will ultimately lose his or her identity.

All the aforementioned authors' views will be useful in research. They will guide the researcher to establish the importance and causes of change of names and surnames among the Vatsonga.

2.2.6 Harrison (2009)

Harrison shows the power of assimilation which results in the weakening of identity when he says (2009:1):

Indigenous peoples of Siberia maintain a tenuous pummeled by forces of linguistic and cultural assimilation on the one hand, and empowered by a discourse of self-determination on the other. We investigate two recent trends in Tuvan anthroponymic praxis (i.e. choice and use of given names, nicknames and kinship terms).

This investigation of the Tuvans is similar to what transpires with the Vatsonga in terms of choice of names and why the names are given to bearers of such names. Sometimes they were compelled to use the alternative choice because of the similarities of names amongst the siblings. The similarities cause confusion and illusion. The wrong person end up receiving and opening letters of other siblings due to the assimilation of names and surnames. These tendencies could protrude to create tension in the family. For instance two brothers could not burry one another because they thought they were not relatives due to the different surnames. He further states (2009:1) that:

We adopt the premise that naming practices are a type of minor everyday linguistic behaviour socio-culture milieu. Such forces internal to a culture might include the unique aesthetic values, taboos, protocols, cultural practices and ethnic identity of a people. External forces might include political factors influence of a native language or culture, the relative prestige or status of a native language vis-à-vis a dominant language; and control of cultural capital.

It is the same experience of implications with Vatsonga that the external forces played a vital role as the influence of another language and culture has been manipulating change in surnames and naming practices. Harrison (2009:7) also cited the issue of the policy implementation which is also affected Vatsonga in the South African context when he affirms that:

Many families who were targeted by repressive policies in the 1950's willingly gave up their surname and assumed a given name in its place. Russian functionaries were reportedly unable or unwilling to distinguish between given names and surnames and mixed up the two categories when distributing identity documents.

Harrison demonstrates that name and surname changing is not new in African context as it depicts the dichotomy of political affiliation and disparity amongst African people. This also illustrates the collective and historical experiences that comment on social issues that delineate the social atmosphere at a given perspective.

Mpande (2006:108) also asserts that:

While surnames may refer to collective and more historical experiences, first, or given, names comment on more temporary social issues and are thus more relevant in deciphering the social atmosphere at a given time.

Magaisa (1997:39) puts emphasis on the fact that the pride of the nation is on the inner core of the nucleus of its culture. The death of its genealogy is in the molting of its tradition. He further says the flourishing of the culture is when the people take pride in its rituals and tradition. He describes by saying:

*Vutinyungubyisi bya rixaka byi le nson'weni wa rona,
Ndhavuko i ngula ya ririmi,
Rifu ra rixaka ri le ku hehliweni ka ndhavuko,
Ncheleto wa ndhavuko i vutunyungubyisi,
Wona i mana wa ririmi.*

Va kwihi Vatsonga va xiviri,

*Vatsonga va nghagula ni njhovo?
Va deha ni mbhobvu,
Xibetso ni nchochwana
Byi rhengile.*

This rhetoric question emphasises that the real Vatsonga have disappeared because one can hardly find Vatsonga who take pride in their traditional attire that distinguishes them from other natives. He echoes that the Western culture contributed to the demise of the roots of the Vatsonga and in this way they have lost their real identity.

2.3 PATRONYMIC OF FAMILY NAMES AND SURNAMES

2.3.1 Mtombeni (2008)

Mtombeni (2008:52) shows how patronymic played a pivotal role in Vatsonga culture when he patronizes Reverend **Tihomandloti** as a protagonist in his Novel “*Mibya ya Nyekanyeka*” and simultaneously revealing the patronymic identity as denoted by the extract below:

*Mina ndzi rilela mufana wa mina, ndzi ta n'wi rilela mikarhi hinkwayo. Ku nga vi na un'we loyi a rilaka hikuva **Munene** wa rila, a va ni mahlomulo ya mina, handle ko titwa hi xiviri xa yena leswaku wa vaviseka. Hi xona xikhongelo xa mina xo hetelela amuntlha laha masirheni. Amen.*

Tihomandloti is patronymic but the real identity of the Reverend in his agony has been revealed as **Munene**. **Ndloti** is a traditional Vatsonga mat which is contrary to the traditional way of rolling it on the ground. **Munene** is a common patronymic logo of the **Maswanganyi** clan as **Munene wa gwevani**. This trend is observed in many Vatsonga cultural activities. For instance, the **Shilowa** clan praise themselves as **Goxani** as the brand patronymic logo.

2.4 LOBOLO AS A PLIGHT TO THE NAMES AND SURNAMES OF VATSONGA

In some instances *lobola* contributed in bringing this transformation of names and surnames. This is accurately displayed by the *Sowetan* of 15 February 2013 (2013:3):

*Starring in a local romantic movie, Fannie Fourie's *lobolo*, has taught budding actress Zethu Dlomo that a dowry, or *lobolo*, is an important custom in black culture... during filming I learnt how *lobolo* important is.*

Lobola played a significant role in creating a matriarchal surname. This was also caused by the redemption of *lobola* that manipulated the families at logger heads to have an advantage of each other. Although this was against the practices of Vatsonga as they generated the following proverbial sayings:

ndyelo a yi dyi n'wana

This is literal translated as saying the plate does not eat the child. This implies that whoever rears a child does not entitle him or her to own the particular child. The child remains in his or her original clan irrespective of whatever transpires between the families.

2.4.1 Junod (1973)

The other powerful proverb is derived from *Vutlhari bya Vatsonga* (Machangana) by Junod in Proverb number 1671 (1973; 326) cited as:

Xivongo a xi fi ku fa munhu

The above-mentioned proverb is literally translated as “a clan name (praise name) does not vanish, only man vanishes.” In Xitsonga it means that:

*Kasi masiku lawa swivongo swi nyamalala,
Swi mitiwa hi mavito ya vatatana ni vakokwana.*

It implies that these days surnames are degenerating and are engulfed by the names of their fathers and forefathers. This will be dealt with in depth during the course of the research.

In most instances the change is brought about when the affected victims want a sense of belonging and an identity. The people assume the pseudo surnames and pseudo names to be accommodated socially and politically in their areas. In the end, this results in destroying their real identity. The social recognition and perspicacious they enjoy brings an upheaval mind shift to demolish their real identity.

Mpande (2006:109) shows how the African American naming practice deals with the issue of retaining African identity. He puts emphasis on how names were constructed in relation to the morphological and semantical structure. He also depicts how the linguistic processes were involved in name creation.

2.5 ADOPTION OF OTHER CULTURES IN VATSONGA NAMING PRACTICES

2.5.1 Mathebula (2013)

Mathebula (2013:10) asserts that the expansion of trade amongst Vatsonga was the contributing factor in the late 18th century. This expansion led to the assimilation of names and surnames amongst the Vatsonga people:.

The expansion of trade in the latter half of the 18th century also stimulated a movement of Tsonga groups to the west into the Lowveld and into the escarpment. These communities also suffered heavily from Swazi raids. In the 19th century, the upheaval among African chiefdoms drove many Tsonga people westward and into much closer contact with Sotho and Venda groups. By early 1860s in the northern region of Koni, Tsonga and Eastern Sotho groups lived under a loose dual hegemony.

This contention is confirmed by other Vatsonga writers:

2.5.2 Maluleke (1993)

Maluleke shows how naming practice influence the adoption of features from other cultures. This may be observed in his characterization of **Mabutho**; this is the Zulu word meaning the **warriors**.

*Tani hi makwavo Fanisa ni van'wana vana vaMudyaxihi, **Mabutho** u lahlile xinkavana xayena endzeni ka khokholo ra tintshava ta Venda, a deyisa hi Fanisa, a ondliwa ni ku leteriwa hivoko ra le vukosini. Kokwa wa yena, masalelaya vamabula-ndlela etikweni ra Venda, a n'wirhandza leswi nga riki na mpimo.*

This shows how the Vatsonga people assimilated some of the Vhavanḁa customs and values as they associated with them.

2.6 ASSIMILATION OF NAMES AND SURNAMES

What follows is the discussion based on various authors who wrote on the morpho-semantic features of African names.

2.6.1 Mathebula (2013)

Mathebula (2013:11) categorically states that poor organization amongst the Vatsonga attributed to assimilation into other tribes:

Because the Rhonga traders who settled in the Northern Transvaal were not organized into clans and chieftaincies, they were easily assimilated into the Venda tribes, while those who maintained their culture and customs joined other Tsonga tribes who moved closer to the Zoutpansberg in the 1800s as a result of the Gaza wars and the creation of the Kruger National Park.

He continues to display how some of them lost their surname identity to adopt those of the Venda tribe as a form of refuge and new identity. Mathebula (2013:11) says:

In the war with Zwangendaba, who attacked Lwamondo on his way to Mashonaland in 1825, the Lawuti sought refuge on the mountain in fear of the war. After the war, the Lawuti remained up top, having cast off their traditional apparel and having adopted that of the Venda people. They changed their name to Laudzi because they heard of the Laudzi clan of Tavhatsindi who were a Venda tribe.

2.6.1.1 The morphology of names in Bantu

Mpande (2006)

In a remarkable investigation of the morphology of names in Bantu, Mpande (2006:109) elaborates that:

Of all Bantu languages, Nguni has perhaps the more elaborate and overt morphological and derivational semantic process for naming, and therefore offers an interesting opportunity to adequately describe and account for the morphological and semantic processes involved in naming. There are many ways in which names are constructed, depending on the semantic import that the name-giver wants to convey. Nguni affix morphemes appear as either prefixes, as in noun class markers, or as suffixes, as in verbalizers. Stems are fully formed "independent" words at the lexical level. However, some stems can be turned into verbal stems by affixing verbal suffixes, and some verb stems in turn can be turned into names by suffixation.

He further indicates that name formation can be classified into two categories, namely: lexical and derived. He asserts that in Nguni, agglutinating language is harmonized by phonological rules. He contends that the noun or verbal conjugations are the main source for deriving meaning. Mpande (2006:110) states that:

Thus in a name like **Thandeka**, “the loved one”, it is not clear who is loved: the child, mother, or ancestor? The morphology of names also has fundamental implications for syntax because names tend to be both words and sentences, for example: Thembinkosi is “we trust in the lord,”

This tendency is visible in the naming practices of Vatsonga, for example:

Tshembansovo = trust the mercy.

According to Mpande all verbs in Bantu languages end in a final vowel [a], which is a default absolute tense feature in verbs. He alluded that names are also morphologically related to other grammatical categories, and in the following example the derivation process reflects [o] or [i] as a final vowel to verb stems:

Ivusal (revise) → *Vuso* (revival)

Izondal (hate) → *Mzondi* (hater)

Ihlazal (embarrass) → *Hlazo* (disgrace)

Ithakathal (bewitch) → *Mthakathi* (witch)

2.6.1.2 Koopman (1985)

Koopman in his research pays attention to the morphology of Zulu names. He regards a name as a specific form of address, not a generic form, such as *sakubona mfana* (greetings to a boy) or *we baba!* (greetings, father). He emphasises that the greetings show the position and the hierarchy of a person who is being greeted occupy in the society. In this way we can tell the age groupings of the person; this can also depict the relationship of the two people exchanging the greetings. Koopman also distinguishes the differences between Zulu and Xhosa surnames, clan-names and praise-names. Koopman further accepts that:

The Zulus call the surname *isibongo* and relate it to the clan-name; the *izithakazelo* is something else. The Xhosas have a surname (ifani) but relate their clan-name to their clan praises, calling them *isiduko* and *ezinye iziduko* (other names).

He emphasizes that the Xhosa people still differentiate between a surname and a clan name, while on the other hand for the Zulu people the word *isibongo* embraces both the surname and the clan name.

Koopman in his work deliberated on both male and female names. In this respect, he also distinguishes between male and female names and then employs the concept of “marked” and “unmarked” categories. In the same manner Koopman affirms that the majority of Zulu names are definitely marked either as male or female, and that such calibrating is morphological, lexical, or syntactic.

According to Koopman, the infixes –no-, -ma- and –so- are primarily regarded as name-indicators. They are regularly used in the formation of female names.

(a) The -no- infix

Examples of names reflecting the infix -no- are as follows:

UNomvula (Miss Rain) uNobantu (Miss people), uNomasonto (Miss Sundays) uNomkhubulwane (princess of Heaven), uNomusa (Miss Mercy), uNokuphiwe (Miss Given), uNolwandle (Miss Sea), uNomabhunu (Miss Afrikaners) , and uNokuthula (Miss Quiet).

(b) The -ma- infix

The infix -ma- serves as the feminine marker. Examples of names using the infix -ma- are as follows:

uMantusi (she – of- the Ntusi)
uMangcobo (she – of – the Ngcobos)
uMasesi (of the sisters)

uMantombi (of the girls)
uMantombi (of – the –girls)

(c) The -so- infix

The infix -so- can be used purely as a male marker. For example:

uSonwabu (Mr Chameleon)
uSomfana (Mr Boy)

2.7 THE VERBALISATION PROCESS IN NAME CONSTRUCTION

According to Mpande's investigation, suffixes are very common in the Nguni naming practice, for example:

Thanda (verb, love) → *thando*(noun) → *thandeka/Thandwa/Thandiwe* (the loved one).

Lungaa (verb, correct) → *lungo* (noun) → *lungile* (the one set right)

Nhlanza (verb, purify) → *Nhlanzo*(noun) → *Nhlanzekile* (the cleansed one)

Linda (verb, wait)→ *lindo* (noun) → *Lindiwe* (the awaited one)

Dinga (verb, need)→ *dingo* (noun) → $\frac{Dingile}{Dingase}$ (the needed one)

He further says that suffixes not only convert the stem into different phonological and grammatical realization, but also impart different semantic impulses of social meaning. He affirms that:

It is these semantic impulses that help interpret the related activity implied in the verbal extension, i.e., applicative, causative, intensive, passive etc. The -ka extension, for instance, indicates a stative condition with respect to social space.

For example:

Bongeka (be thanked).

Thandeka (the favourite one).

He further elucidates names with a *-le* suffix that indicates a semantic persistence:

Hlanzekile (purified, continuously cleansed) or *Lungile* (be righteous, consistently well behaved). This persistence could be seen in Xitsonga naming practices. For example:

Tsaka (verb, be happy) → *Tsakile* (be happy, continuous happiness).

Khensa (verb, give thanks) → *Khensile* (be thanked, continuous thankful).

These are verbs that show past continuous tense that the action has already taken place.

Mpande also identifies names with *-se* suffix that indicates a cause-and-effect intensity, causing or be caused, as in the forms of:

Dingase (cause to need).

Mzondwase (the one caused to hate).

This type of suffix is rarely seen in the naming of Vatsonga practice. However, we can observe similar to this tendency the use of the suffix *-sa* in names such as:

Tongisa (cause to brag).

Fambisa (cause to go).

He continues to illustrate names containing a plural suffix (*-ni*) which are used in Nguni names to denote command and as an appeal; for example:

Bongani (be thanked) this is also adopted in the naming practice of Vatsonga Names.

Kholwani (be faithful) *Themhani* (be trusting) we will see the prevalent of this naming practice in Chapter Four.

2.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the chapter has demonstrated that Vatsonga and Nguni cultures in some instance, share similar strategies in creating new personal names which in turn are reflective of their socio-political environment. The chapter has also displayed that the coining of new names is largely morphological in nature.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the methodology and procedures utilised to conduct this study. In addition, data collection tools and analysis methods are explained.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Different researchers regard research and research methodology as follows:

3.2.1 Research methodology

Falmer (2006:9) states:

Research methodology is the way in which one collects and analyzes data.

The qualitative research method was used by applying the following approaches: content analysis and systematic coding.

3.2.2 Content Analysis

Maree, *et al.* (2012:101) defines content analysis as follows: "Content analysis is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarizes message content". They further point out that content analysis is usually used:

To refer to the analysis of such things as books, brochures, written documents, transcripts, news reports and visual media. Sometimes content analysis is used when working with narratives such as diaries or journals, or to analyze qualitative responses to open-ended questions on surveys, interviews or focus groups.

Leedy *et al.* (2005:108) define content analysis as,

... a detailed and systematic examination of a particular body of material e.g. television shows, advertisements, textbooks for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, biases within that material. Content analyses are typically performed on forms of human communication including art' books, newspapers, films, television, music, video tapes of human interactions, and transcripts.

This indeed is relevant to the present study where names and surnames are analysed in terms of the changes that they have undergone.

3.2.3 Coding

Maree (2012:101) defines Coding thus:

Coding is the process of reading carefully through your transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningfully analytical units ... Coding is therefore defined as marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying names.

This will be realised when the **Nguni** and **Vatsonga** cultures are analysed as regards the creation of new personal names.

3.3 STUDY AREA AND SITE

The study was conducted in the Hlanganani region in Vhembe district in Limpopo Province.

3.4 PROCEDURES

A pilot study was done to verify if the interview would yield the desired results before the actual interviews were conducted. Interviewing the respondents was a challenging task because one had to secure appointments telephonically and to conduct door to door visits to respective sampled respondents. Respondents were interviewed based on unstructured questions.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data from interviews were analysed according to Tesch's Method (Renata:1990). Tesch's method requires one to develop categories and themes as follows:

- Data are transcribed verbatim.
- Transcription is read for better comprehension.
- Ideas about possible categories are written down as these came to mind.
- Similar topics are clustered together.
- Related topics are grouped together to reduce the number of categories.
- Interrelationship between categories are identified.
- Final decision is taken on the abbreviation of categories.
- Findings from interviews are compared with those from documented analysis.

3.6 TARGET GROUPS

Traditional leaders, pastors, parents, traditional healers, teachers were selected as they are experts in their field of practice. These are the people who have been entrusted with the important task of naming children in the Vatsonga culture. This group is widely consulted for their expertise when the child of Mutsonga is given a name.

3.7 SAMPLING

A purposive sample was conducted wherein 26 respondents were interviewed. They were categorized as follows:

- (a) 5 traditional leaders;
- (b) 5 teachers of the language;
- (c) 5 pastors;
- (d) 5 traditional healers; and
- (e) 6 parents comprising three women and three men.

In the interview the challenges encountered on a daily basis as regards naming trend was explored. The causes and effects of naming practices were also established. Data were collected using two methods namely, content analysis and systematic coding through unstructured interviews and open-ended questions.

3.7.1 What are the causes and effects of changing names?

Respondents	Number of respondents	Causes of changes
Chiefs	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrants change names to seek residential site • Prestigious lifestyle • Marriage • Distortion of names by officials • Squabbles in families
Pastors	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming the child after his father's name • The use of nicknames • The use of patronymic names • The meaning of the name might result in negative or positive impact.
Traditional healers	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By not following right procedures • By not consulting ancestors for the proper name • Misfortune • By deserting ancestors
Teachers	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncomfortable to use his traditional name • The child's self- actualization • Due to unbearable names
Parents	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to lack of consultation that raises suspicion • Unfashionable and unfency name • Name attached to evil spirits • Due to egoism

3.7.2 Traditional leaders

The changing of names is prevalent amongst migrants when seeking residential sites. It is normally done when there is redemption of *lobola*. Changing of names also happened because some peoples' names were distorted during the apartheid era as they were misspelt. Names were changed to get housing subsidy, for example. Unmarried women also changed their surnames to get approval from authorities and own a residential site.

3.7.3 Pastors

The changing of names happened by nicknaming people as is seen with many churches that have pseudo names because they were attached to their church leaders. The position of the church leader sometimes changed the complexity of naming just like a son being named as a junior to his father's name. Some people prefer to use family names instead of surnames for example, **Mafukele** instead of **Valoyi**.

3.7.4 Traditional healers

If the parents do not adhere to the name given to the child by his or her ancestors this might invite a misfortune. According to traditional healers a name proclaims blessings to the family, hence consultation is needed before giving a suggested name.

3.7.5 Teachers

The learner might feel uncomfortable using his or her native or traditional name and therefore decide to use another name. Nicknames attribute to self-actualization and therefore the learner might prefer it more than the first name. Changing of names go with the state of integrity so if the learner is a hero he or she might want to sustain the name.

3.7.6 Parents

The name is sometimes viewed with suspicion if it is changed without apparent reasons. So, mothers maintain that if the name is not sweet, especially nowadays and sounds like it belongs to an elderly person the youngster can drop it in favour of a more modern name.

Fathers hold the view that changing of names sometimes raises emotions as it has been seen with name changes from former apartheid names in favor of the struggle icons.

3.8 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Several tools are used in this research: interviews, documentary survey, coding, unstructured questions and note transcription mechanisms. These research techniques assisted the researcher to highlight naming practices amongst the Vatsonga people.

(a) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used in the research. Unstructured questions were used to obtain relevant information from the respondents. The findings from interviews are compared with those emerging from document analysis.

(b) Documentary survey

Data were collected from various authors writing on this subject. Data collected from these rich archives were coded and compared with those from the respondents.

(c) Note taking

Data were transcribed verbatim and categories were established as notes were analysed to find patterns. Similar topics are clustered together and related topics are grouped together to reduce the number of categories. Inter-relationship between categories was identified.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with the research methodology employed in this study. Qualitative research was used to gather data from respondents: pastors, teachers, parents, chiefs, and traditional leaders.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHANGE OF NAMES IN XITSONGA

In this chapter the main causes of name changes will be shown. The historical background to this practice will be presented and explanations will be given as to why it is necessary for name changes to take place.

4.1 CHANGING A BOY'S NAME IN INITIATION SCHOOL

It will be proper to say that in the Vatsonga culture there is no clear indication that they used to have initiation schools. It seems that they inherited this custom through trans-cultural interaction with the neighbouring cultures. Most of the Vatsonga names were inherited from the Bapedi, Vhavenda, Swazis and Zulus, groups of people through whom they came into contact as neighbours or through day-to-day social encounters.

4.2 XITSONGA NAMES FROM THE INITIATION SCHOOL

4.2.1 Soyaphi

Ya (verb, go) → *soya* (will go) → *soyaphi* (noun, where will we go).

This name is derived from the Swazis and Zulus, and literally means “where will we go after the marriage has failed” or “Where will we go after having been defeated in the war.” The name could also be traced to the apartheid period when people were forcefully removed from their homes. So this was an outcry, desperately asking the authorities where they would go. In a family context, the name is normally given to a boy after his parents' marriage has been dissolved. This is a way of wondering what the future holds for the family as a whole.

4.2.2 Busaphi

Busa (verb, rein) → *buso* (noun, where do you govern or rule?)

This name is also derived from the Zulu culture. The name questions the authority of the other party. In this way the name demarcates the territory either personal or communal. At a personal level it is to tell someone not to invade the other party and in a context of, for

example two communities, the meaning is that one chief or elder has dominated the other through trespassing boundaries.

4.2.3 Misesenyani

This name is derived from the Sotho name Mosesenyane, meaning the lean or slender one. This name means that the person is economically or financially rich, but physically he or she is lean. In the African culture, it is generally believed that once one is rich their physically appearance should change; normally they should become fat.

4.2.4 Khazamula

The name is derived from the Zulu name “iKhazimulo”, meaning the ever shining one. The person given this name is seen to be shining, that he or she is visibly prospering in all aspects of life. If a clan is given this name it means that it is visible in that its progress can be easily seen by all.

4.2.5 Masiza

Siza (verb, help) → *masiza* (noun, the one who helps).

The name is derived from iSiswati, meaning the one who continues to assist even in unbearable situations. The one given this name is said to continue helping others even in times of dire need. The name suggests that this individual is selfless and is keen to assist other people at any time. In other words, this person is a good Samaritan, ready to help at all times without calculating cost.

4.2.6 Ndhe'neza

N'eza (verb, thing) → *ndhen'eza* (noun, that thing).

The name is derived from the Zulu name Ndengeza meaning a particular thing that a certain group of people knows about. In other words, it is a secret which is known only to specific individuals who form an inner group. For example, if some people who are not a

part of the group are around, those who are part of it can say for instance “bring that *ndhen’eza*”, avoiding in this way to mention the name of the thing that has to be brought because they do not want the other party to know. This name is shared with the great Siweya chieftaincy, as they also used this word when they were at war, not wanting to be direct, thus keeping their plans to themselves.

4.2.7 Dingani

Dinga (verb, need) → *dingo* (noun, needy) → *dingani* (need them)

The name is derived from a Zulu king: meaning desperate in needs and wants. This is associated with Dingaan of the Zulus who was cunning and was able to destroy the British who were oppressing his people. The one given this name was associated with power, prestige and bravery. The family might be implying that they needed more power to defeat their enemies. The person might also have been born on 16 of December which has been designated as a reconciliation day in South Africa.

4.2.8 Nghezimani

Ngheza (verb, clean, brighten) → *nghezimani* (noun, be whiter or be clean).

The name is associated with the “Anglicization” of a person's life style. This name indicates that the person lives a Western type of life and adheres to Western culture. The name can also be given to a village to show that its inhabitants follow a Western lifestyle.

4.2.9 Khayizeni

Khayiza (verb, rebuke) → *khayizeni* (noun, the rebuke).

The name is derived from the Venda word “*kaidza*” meaning to rebuke. Someone doing bad and evil things is called to order and is advised to return to good practices. The person with this name is carrying a message for other people to refrain from doing certain things which are unacceptable. This person could be a message to the whole clan, for example.

4.2.10 Makhahlela

Khahlela (verb, beat) → *makhahlela* (noun, the beater).

The name is derived from a Zulu name “*Khahlela*”, meaning beating someone. For an individual, this name means that the family has “beaten” something or someone, meaning that it has won or defeated some evil. A clan bearing this name shows that they used to be warriors of note, defeating a number of communities in their fights to claim territories or in settling other disputes.

4.2.11 Sikhalele

Khala (verb, cry) → *sikhalo* (noun, the outcry).

The word is derived from a Zulu name “*Sikhalo*” meaning outrageous cry. Someone so named may carry a family’s message after some distressing even has happened, for example the death of a family member or friend. During the apartheid period the person so named could be carrying the collective message of the struggle for liberation.

4.2.12 Khumbuza

Khumbu (verb, reminded) → *khumbuza* (noun, remind).

The name can be traced from both Venda and Zulu (*khumbudzolkhumbuza*) meaning to remind and remember. The name might be given to a person to remind him or her of something memorable in that person’s life. It can be to remind this person of some great event for example which happened when the individual was born. This event can be both a happy one or otherwise.

4.2.13 Gija

Gija (verb, excrete)

The name is from the Zulu language but it is derogatory. It means faeces. Although it is not a very “clean” name, this name would suggest that the bearer is very strong and able to demolish his or her enemies, reducing them to waste.

4.2.14 Gezani

Geza (verb, bath) → *gezani* (noun, take bath)

The name is derived from a Zulu word “geza” meaning to take a bath. The suffix [-ni] would suggest that the person can do anything exceedingly well. In other words it is a praise name. The family would be praising themselves or the parents would be saying that the child will grow up to become a great person who will be able to do many great things in life. This name is also a warning, telling people that whatever they are saying, normally lies, should stop, that they should “wash their mouths”. When this name is given to an individual, it can mean, in the context of marriage for example, that one of the spouses was not clean, in the sense that there was infidelity involved. The name therefore tells the offending spouse to wash, to come clean and disclose what happened. The name can also imply that one should not blame others before assessing oneself. It is therefore a reminder that one should put one’s house in order and only then should one comment on other people’s issues.

4.2.15 Misapa

Sapa (verb, yield) → *Musapa* (noun, get strong *muthi* or yield better herbs).

The name has its origin in Mozambique in a village called Musapa. The name literally means that one is coming from faraway to strengthen himself or herself, so one should not take chances as the individual may be badly affected. The person bearing this name warns people that he or she has a strong *muthi* (traditional medicine) that can destroy his or her enemies. The *muthi* referred to here is said to come from Musapa and it is believed that in Mozambique there are strong herbs (for *muthi*).

4.2.16 Sevha

Sevha (verb, serve) → *ku sevha* (verb, to serve) → *sevhani* (noun, provide).

The name is probably a borrowing from the English word **serve**. The name implies that the bearer is a server, that the person is born to serve. So, it can be a reminder for the bearer to serve people, or it can be a reminder to give the best of one's needs and services. The person bearing the name is expected to serve people with pride and passion.

4.2.17 Makasela

Kasa (verb, crawl) → *ku kasa* (verb, to crawl) → *makasela* (noun, go towards one's goal).

This name implies that the person is struggling, crawling, but despite this problem the person is able to achieve much through determination and focus of purpose. In other words, the person is saying that he or she is equal to the task and the goal set will be achieved. This is a motivational name.

4.2.18 Mizimbeni

Zimba (verb, fat) → *muzimba* (noun, fat body).

The name is derived from a Zulu name Muzimba, meaning the body. The person named after this name is saying that he has bad luck in his body, meaning that someone put something in his or her body. This name appears in a Xitsonga song below:

*A muzimbeni wa mina no va na badi.
A ni na mali makhelwani; no va sego.
Makhelwani n'wana mhanee..!
A muzimbeni wa mina no va na bade..!*

(In my body I have bad luck
I have no money, my neighbour; I can do nothing on my own
I plead with you, you're the only source of my needs
I am just anticipating bad luck).

4.2.19 Mhlava

Hlava (verb, pierce) → *mhlava* (noun, the earth or the piercer).

This is a word derived from a Zulu noun meaning the earth or to pierce through. This name is also related to the great king of **Vankuna** in Nkowankowa located adjacent to Tzaneen/Dzaneni in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The person named after this name is declaring he associates himself with the rulership of the Vankuna regiment. This might also imply that he is as strong as the king of Vankuna and his people. The name becomes an iconic resemblance of the Nkuna people. The name might connote that the person is so skillful that he is able to pierce his enemies, in that way destroying them.

4.2.20 Famandha/Famanda

Fa- (verb, give) → *manda* (noun, power) → *famandha* (noun, give power).

This name is derived from the Vhavenda compound name entailed in their ritual names given to the graduate from the initiation school. The word “*fa*” means to give and “*manda*” means power. The person named after this name is saying that he is the one who gives power. In other words, he strengthens those who are weak and weary, restoring their physical as well as emotional strength. This individual motivates and sustains those who grow weary.

4.3 THE NAMES GIVEN TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

In Xitsonga culture, there are certain names which are given to girls when they come back from the initiation school, which is a school where girls are taught social norms and customs pertaining to the ethnic group. When young people come from these schools they are regarded as mature. They are also seen as having new responsibilities. It is therefore thought as proper that they should have new identities in the form of being given new names. *Misevetho* and *Vukhomba* are also practised by the Vhavenda and Sothos, and these being neighbours to Vatsonga, some of the Tsonga names given to the new initiates are influenced by these cultures. The following are examples of such names.

4.3.1 NAMES RELATED TO *MISEVETHO*

Most names that are given to girls from the *misevetho* initiation school are derived from Venda and Sotho.

4.3.1.1 **Ndaheni**

Nda (verb, greetings) → *ndaheni* (noun, instruct me)

This is derived from a Venda word “*ndayeni*” meaning to give instructions and precepts so that the person may follow good practices that have been imparted to her when she was in the initiation school. The name also indicates that the person should follow instructions from elders in all respects.

4.3.1.2 **Mphephu**

When a person is given this name, that individual is associating himself or herself with the royal family of *Khosi Khulu Vho Thobela Thoni Mphephu Ramabulana*.

4.3.1.3 **Maxawu**

This name is derived from the Venda name **Mashau**, who is associated with the Vhafamadi dynasty. The person named after this name would be sharing the same sentiments of Vhafamadi, meaning “The giver of plenty of water to quench thirst”. The bearer of the name simply tells people that she is the fountain that quenches thirst, meaning that she is a kind, welcoming person.

4.3.1.4 **Mijaji**

Jaji (verb, judge) → *mijaji* (noun, the judge).

The name is derived from the Balobedi, associated with the great matriarchal dynasty Queen Modjadji of the Balobedi people around Modjadjiskloof and Tzaneen jurisdiction. The person named after this name regards oneself as having the same powers as the queen, who is said to be capable of making rain. In short, this is an honourable name.

4.3.1.5 Mamaila

The name is derived from the Balobedi and is associated with the great cousins of Queen Modjadji. A person given this name is said to possess certain special qualities, that even if the mother is gone, (*mamaila*, mother is gone) the person is able to do something.

4.3.1.6 Ximphephani

Phepha (verb, be safe) → *ximphephani* (noun, the saved).

This name is a diminutive of **Mphephu**, the person who is named after this name might be saying that she or the family are followers of **Mphephu**, a Venda king, as has been indicated earlier. This again, shows the affinity that exists between the Tsonga and Venda people. In Tsonga, **Ximpephani** means a small piece of paper, so the likelihood is that the name has association with **Mphephu**.

4.3.1.7 Misolwa

Sola (verb, scorn) → *misolwa* (noun, the scorned one).

The name sounds like a Siswati name meaning a disrespected person. This name may tell a story of the family or it may refer to some incident in which disrespect was shown. It could also be a lament.

4.3.1.8 Patironi

The name is derived from the English word "Patron", informally meaning boss. The person given this name is given the status of "boss", or it could refer to the family she comes from, that it is a well-to-do family or that the family is better than others in certain ways. Another message here could be that the family is declaring their supremacy in the clan.

4.4 NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH VUKHOMBA

Vukhomba is the initiation school meant for girls and women who have reached acceptable age of marriage. Names include the following *inter alia*:

4.4.1 Madzivandlela

Dziva (verb,thick) → *madzivandila* (noun, know).

The name is derived from the Venḡa name “*madzivhandila*” meaning the one who knows her pathways. The person named after this name is saying that she knows her obligations and responsibilities.

4.5 NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH PRESTIGE AND STATUS FOR WOMEN

4.5.1 Kwatisa

Kwata (verb, be angry) → *kwatisa* (made furious).

Kwatisa is derived from an Afrikaans word “*kwaad*”. This is a name given to remember some event which irritated or infuriated people.

4.5.2 Nothisa

Thisa (verb, bring) → *nothisa* (noun, be warn).

The name is derived from the word “notice”. The name suggests that the person so named is carrying an important message. The person could be carrying a message of beauty, or intelligence, or kindness, or courage, or bravery etc. A related message is that the person is a memorable person in one way or another.

4.5.3 Delela

Delela (verb, disrespect)

The name is derived from a Zulu word “*delela*” meaning reckless talking. The name could be a caution to those who say disrespectful things to the family or clan or to the new person who has given herself this name. This is a way of shutting them off, telling them that they are defeated and that they should not keep quiet.

4.5.4 *Zondheka*

Zondha (verb, hate) → *zondho* (noun, hatred) → *zondheka* (noun, the hated one).

The name is derived from a Zulu word “*zondha*” literally meaning that they hate her. The name suggests that she is being hated and provoked for no apparent reason.

4.5.5 *Dayina*

Daya (verb, dye) → *dayina* (noun, the dyer).

The name could have been derived from the paintings of dye of the blue seal, but it also might have originated from borrowing the English name Diana, e.g., Diana such as Diana Ross and Princess Diana.

4.5.6 *Sayina*

Sayina (verb, sign)

The name comes from the English word “sign”. The name may imply that the one so named has a clear sign of something or she is a clear sign of something or some event. It could be a strong warning that nothing untoward should be done in relation to the person or family. It can also denote that she is determined to live by her oath.

4.5.7 *Rhabela*

Rhabela (verb, pray)

This name is associated with prayer in Sotho culture. **Rhabela** in Xitsonga is also to pray. The person so named be the result of a prayer or the family could be indicating the importance of prayer in their lives, that something big or memorable happened after they had prayed.

4.6 NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN OF PEOPLE

4.6.1 Mpahlela

Phahla (verb, pray to ancestors) → *mupahlo* (noun, cleansing) → *mphahlela* (noun, pray for).

This name can be linked with the surname of the **Mphahlele people**. The name may have been adopted by the people who had lived amongst the Mphahlele people. It could also suggest, make a cleansing ceremony to appease the ancestors, as the name means to pray in a traditional way.

4.6.2 Msindu

Sinda (verb, heavy or be saved) → *msindo* (noun, noise) → *musindu* (noun, the saved one).

The name is derived from Zulu word "**Msindo**" meaning noise. The person given this name might imply that there were squabbles when the child was born. The quarrel between the husband and wife could be because the child was thought to have been born out of wedlock.

4.6.3 Migiyo

Giya (verb, dance) → *mugiyo* (noun, the dancer).

The name is derived from iSiXhosa name during the initiation school that they would be dancing wearing "*u Muguyo*". The dance will be accompanied by a song which goes as follows:

June lo July inyanga zama "fengu"

Nyanga zama fengu x 2

The word *fengu* is a name referring to an uncircumcised person. Winter period is the appropriate time for the initiate to be circumcised.

4.6.4 Yuza

Yuza (noun, user)

The name is derived from the English word “user”. The name might imply that one is now mature enough to be used in any way by anyone.

4.6.5 Diza

Diza (verb, bribe) → *mudizi* (noun, briber).

The word is used in a colloquial way in Zulu. The name refers to the one who bribes in order to gain. The bearer of this name is normally talking to ladies that he is generous in giving money of which it implies that he is not stingy in giving money.

4.6.6 Khanyisa

Khanya (verb, shine or bright) → *khanyisa* (noun, brighten).

The name is derived from the verb in Zulu “*u ku Khanya*” meaning to shine or to put some light. The person who is named after this name is said to brighten someone all the time.

4.6.7 Mbazima

Zima (verb, tight) → *nzima* (noun, tough) → *mbazima* (noun, they are tough).

The name is derived from a Zulu word “*nzima*” meaning too tough and stubborn. The name is given to a person to say that people are hard headed and too difficult to cooperate. The people in reference cannot be negotiated with to settle scores.

4.6.8 Phazama

Zama (verb, try) → *phazama* (noun, err).

The name is derived from the Zulu word to say one is confused. The person is named in a polite fashion not to say “*u ya bayiza*” because it may sound as a derogative to an elderly

person. It is similar to “*u ya khohlisa*” meaning he could mislead to err, the word may serve as euphemism. From the respondents, one learns the word is not in Xitsonga terminology but has been assimilated by the initiates when they graduate from the initiation school.

4.6.9 *Nghovedlani*

Dla (verb, eat) → *nghovedlani* (compound noun, whatever they eat).

The word comes from a compound noun consisting of “*ngrove*” meaning whatever it may be, *dlani* meaning eat. The name is a Zulu name; to say that one does not care what they are eating, therefore they remain being nothing to him. This is the name given to a person to tell his opponent that he does not mind his status as he will always remain nothing to him.

4.6.10 *Zandla*

Zandla (noun, hands)

The word is derived from a Zulu word which means hands. The person given this name is associated with power. The name is given to a person who is too strong. He is not easy to fight or wrestle with.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 THE ONOMASTIC CHANGE OF THE SURNAMES IN XITSONGA

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2012:1027) defines onomastics as “the study of the history and origin of names, especially names of people”.

As has been pointed out previously, the study of the origin of people's names is important in that names carry with them the history of the named or their communities. In other words, names can carry the dynamics of the communities in which the people come from, showing their origin or the kind of key events that took place. The present research was carried out through interviews.

Louis Cohen cited by Kvale (2006:267) notes that:

An interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction of knowledge for production and emphasizes the social aspects of research data.

Unstructured Questions were used in the research as they allowed the interviewer some autonomy in asking broad questions in whatever order seemed appropriate.

5.2 CHANGING OF SURNAMES BECAUSE OF MARGINALIZATION

The following surnames were affected as a result of marginalization:

5.2.1 Mazibuko

The surname appears amongst the Vatsonga due to the marginalization of their original surname which is Maswanganyi. This came about when plots and houses were being allocated. It was a little difficult if you were a Shangaan to be assisted promptly. A number of people opted for *nguni* surnames instead. When they did so, help came by quickly. Harrison (2009:7) states:

Many families who were targeted by repressive policies in the 1950s willingly gave up their surname and assumed a given name in its place. Russian functionaries were reportedly unable or unwilling to distinguish between given names and surnames and mixed up the two categories when distributing identity documents.

As mentioned earlier, some of the Vatsonga people used surnames such as **Mazibuko** and **Masia** because when using these surnames assistance was quick to come. This was during the apartheid era and a number of things happened along racial lines.

Another way the Vatsonga lost their identity is through a confusion in using names. The Vatsonga surnames make use of patronymic naming system which places the father's name first, followed by the child's name for example, if **Marimani** is the father's name it was followed by the child's name (e.g. **Khoza**). In this case the child would be called **Marimani Khoza**, in which case Marimani would be assumed to be the surname, while the family's surname was Khosa. In this process Khosa would be lost.

Mpande (2006:108) points out that some people can lose their names because of the new environment they have gone to settle in:

However, changing a personal name to suite the prevailing socio-cultural or political environment is nothing new in African history. Names, as words by which reality is known and spoken of, are the most meaningful lexicon in the vocabulary of any inventory as they not only name the environment, but also store all the distinctions about fauna and flora.

For example, the Vatsonga people known as **Makhuvele** went to reside in the Bakwena area and became **Mugwena** and the **Nkunas** at Spoloken assumed associate names such as **Magayisa**, meaning the one from the mines, that is the one with wealth and money. In this case the surname disappears and the people are given a new identity.

5.2.2 Mhlehazi

This surname is derived from a Zulu word "*muhlekazi*" which means a beautiful lady. This was also through marginalization. The people who were so named are from the **Valoyi** clan. They went ahead and accepted the surname because it helped them get services in these areas they had decided to settle in. They were now taken as being Zulus, which made their life easier.

5.3 SURNAMEN DERIVED FROM HARD WORK

5.3.1 Marimani

Rima (verb, plough) → *marimani* (noun, the plougher, farmer).

Marimani denotes a person who farms. Their original surname was **Khosa**, but this name was lost because of the profession and hard work of these people. They were named after their activities. Their original surname is **Khosa** with **Mavona** as their praise name originating from an area called Bileni in Mozambique. They got their new surname in Manashi now called Masakona adjacent to Mahatlani.

The surname came when Khosa's children were asked to say their surname during the *doom pasi* application. Not understanding what the officials were asking, those who knew them said they were **Marimani** and the new name stuck.

5.3.2 Shondlani (*Shiwundlani*)

The **Shondlani** are basically the Nkunas. This can be traced back in their praise songs when they praise their **Xivongo** (surname). In their praise songs they trace their history and as they do so they mention who they actually are, the Nkunas. As they were hard working and generous (*Shiwundlani* meaning "taking care of others") the people with whom they lived gave them their new identity.

5.4 CHANGING OF SURNAME BECAUSE OF THE NATIVE SPEAKERS OF THE LANGUAGE

We have numerous surnames converted as a result of the native speakers. We have surnames such as:

5.4.1 Rikhotso

Khotsa (verb, bend) → *Rikhotso* (noun, the bender).

This surname has been distorted by the people that the Vatsonga met along the way as they looked for new places to settle. This surname has changed to **Lekgotso**, as spelt by the Pedi people. Some write it as **Rekgotso** and others as **Lebese** or "**Rivisi**". In some instances it is referred to as **Ubisi**.

5.4.2 *Valoyi*

Loya (verb, the witch) → *loyi* (pronoun, this) → *Valoyi* (noun, for this one).

This surname has many branches, with **Valoyi** as the umbrella clan. **Valoyi** is sometimes misspelled as **Baloyi** or **Baloi**, **Barlow** or **Baldin**. The branching of the surname happened because the descendants of **Valoyi** preferred to use their great grandfathers' names, which will be discussed below.

5.4.3 *Mukansi*

Kasa (verb, crawl) → *Mukasi* (noun, the crawler).

Mkansi is a name given to the first born of **Valoyi**. So they called themselves **Mukansi**, meaning that in times of war they were able to hide themselves in gauges and dongas in order to ambush their enemies. However, this tribe is disregarded and despised by their siblings, having come from a weaker group. Some of the **Mkansi** people are nowadays know as **Nkuzana**, **Mamitwa** (*n'wamitwa*) or **Mathebula**.

5.4.4 *Lowani*

Lowani is spelt incorrectly as *Lowane*. This tribe is regarded as the youngest tribe in the **Valoyi** hierarchy. In their praise songs, they refer themselves as "low ones". It will come as no surprise to see this group calling themselves **Low one** as a surname. From this group some call themselves **Masochas** in the same hierarchy, meaning that they are soldiers. This group is found in places such as Elim and Tiyani areas.

5.4.5 *Xitsavi*

This is another **Valoyi** clan which claims to be the eldest although there is no tangible evidence to this claim.

5.4.6 *Makaringi*

This is another clan within the **Valoyi** family tree. **Mongwe** is also claimed to belong to the **Valoyi** dynasty. The **Makaringi** belong to **Mukhalanga**, which is **Munyai** dynasty. Their origin can be traced to Zambia and Zimbabwe. This shows the extent to which the **Vatsonga** people have spread in the region influencing kingdoms such as **Monomotapa** and those controlled by **Shaka Zulu** and **Lobengula**.

5.4.7 Mathevula (2013)

According to Mathevula (2013:14), the Valoyi people belonged to the Tembe clan which arrived in South Africa in 1350 from Mozambique. They adopted the Local Rhonga language and culture.

They arrived at **Tembe river** in the southern Tsonga country after breaking away from the great Kalanga tribe of Mashona land in the 12th century led by their renowned chief from whom the name of the tribe was inherited. This clan, therefore, like all other African clans and tribes, came from the north. The great Kalanga tribe originated from the Lake Tanganyika and migrated southwards and then disintegrated into a number of tribes. A number of the present day Tsonga and Venda tribes originated from the Kalanga tribe, which was led by Changameri or Changamire as their overlord. Whereas most remnants of the tribe migrated to the Mozambican territory, very few migrated to the south west of the land. The Changameri dynasty ruled the vast area in Central Africa between Zambezi and Limpopo and a number of tribes and clans within the Tsonga ethnic group claim their roots from this empire.

5.4.8 Makanyi

Kanya (verb, prick) → *Makanyi* (noun, Marula fruits).

This is the last surname to be discussed in this section. The Makanyi people are said to have come from Mozambique. On their arrival in South Africa they were called Manganyi, which is a mispronunciation of their name. The Manganyi clan regard Magoda as their praise name. Some surnames belonging to this family are *Marhanele* and *Nkolele*.

5.5 CHANGING SURNAMES BECAUSE OF RELOCATION

5.5.1 Makhuvele

Khuve (verb, come along) → *makhuvele* (noun, come to gather here).

The Makhuveles are part of the people who got their surname because of relocation. From their original home of Musapa Bileni Province in Mozambique, they went to live in the Bakwena va Mokgalakwena in the Mabopane area. Living with the Bakwena people the Makhuveles ended up being known as the Mokoenas.

5.5.2 Invention of new surnames

When Vatsonga migrated to new environments some retained their original names whereas others invented new surnames. This is visibly with Xika clans like *ngomane* who are commonly known as Kubayi and Makuhani respectively. This common trend is also seen with Sarila who are Makhuveles and sometimes called Mugwena or Mokoena as they happened to live among the Bakwena in Hammarskraal and in Limpopo Province.

Mathebula (2013:12) describes how and why this invention of surname happened.

The reason is that most of the clans broke away from their main branches in Mozambique and fled the Soshangane rule, while some of the clans were cut off their main branches during demarcation of the Mozambique-Transvaal border. These retained the Tsonga name and also either retained their original tribes or invented new ones.

As can be seen, the Mathebula surname is part of the names that were given following the relocation of the Vatsonga.

5.6 SURNAMES ASSOCIATED WITH HOSPITALITY

5.6.1 Miyen (visitor)

This surname came about when the **Miyen** people received visitors with open arms. Their real surname is Chavalala or Michavi, but they got their new name (Miyen) because of their generosity. They are presently located in the Elim area. This is how they would recite their genealogy:

*Miyen wa hlanganisa
Wa Majamu, wa Muchivirika,
Wa Munene, wa ntshan'wa- ku lala,
Wa Rimani, wa nyoxi ya Malangadzo
Miyeni, Chavalala!*

They also praise their clan in the following manner:

*Hi Va-Shingwidzi, vanwi va mati mo dzunga,
Va-Makhwita nhlavela, wa Kokolombani,
Wa Masindhela-Zinkunini, wa Muya -nge- Jozi
Ku ba khwanyana, ba ku u pinde
Va ka doonga lika Mavuso,
Si ba ka Ngwana!*

The name **Michavi** also suggests that they once lived with **Vhashavhi** people in Venda. They are also known as Thabalala, suggesting that they lived among the Vhavanḁa. In Zululand they are known as the Mshengu.

5.7 SURNAMES AS RESULTS OF SHARING COMMON NAMES

5.7.1 Makhayingi

Some people decided to use different surnames because as they shared the same surname problems occurred. For example, because people had the same surname, the authorities would arrest the wrong people. To solve this problem new surnames were invented. This is the case of Makhayingi, whose real surname is Nkanyani (Zitha). These associate themselves with the Nxumalos who are the descendants of Shoshangaan. This is evident in their clan praise songs as they speak about their supporting the Nxumalos thus:

Nkanyani, dhavezitha Ndwandwel wethu!

5.8 SURNAMES ASSOCIATED WITH GREAT GRANDFATHERS

5.8.1 Mahange

Hanga (verb, stretched legs aside) → *mahange* (noun, the stretcher of legs).

Mahange is the younger brother to Mhinga and the elder brother to Mahonisi. They are the sons of Nkuri. They are Van'wanati; from the Maluleke clan. **Mahange** is used as a surname of the *Van'wanati* tribe who hail from *Valdezia* and Waterval. They also originated from Mozambique.

Mhinga is sometimes used as part of the **Maluleke** clan. These are the senior kings of the Van'wanati clan. Mathebula (2013:20) acknowledges this by saying:

Mhinga was the son of Nkuri and became the most famous chief of the **N'wanati** when the tribe was divided into two with the determination of the Mozambique-Transvaal border. Six of the N'wanati chiefs, Xikhumba, **Matsilele**, Manyetwe, N'wazulu, Mahungu and the most senior of them, Mapayi, were left on the Mozambican side while six others, **Mhinga**, Xikundu, Xigalo, Mulamula, Nkuri and later Hlaneki were left on the Transvaal side.

5.9 SURNAMES ASSOCIATED WITH MATRIARCHY

The Oxford Advanced Dictionary of Current English defines matriarchy (2012:16) as “A social system that gives power and authority to women rather than men.”

Many surnames derive from this social setup. The use of the maternal surnames came as a result of:

- (a) Rejection of the mother.
- (b) Redemption of *lobola*.

This problem created a bridge between siblings as the authorities at that time recognized people only if they had the same surname. If one sibling used maternal surname and he or she had to benefit from the father such an individual could not.

5.10 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the change of names, especially collective names such as clan names and surnames takes place because of various dynamics such as marginalization, relocation, invention and family lineage. As for the Vatsonga people, the change of surnames followed this pattern. The next chapter gives the summary, recommendations and concludes the study.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the aim and objectives of the study outlined and explained in chapter one are presented, followed by a summary of the previous chapters. Recommendations are given and conclusions drawn.

6.2 RESTATEMENT OF AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to examine the causes of the changing of names and surnames among the Vatsonga. In order to achieve this aim, the study was to attempt to answer these questions:

- What were the causes of name and surname changes among the Vatsonga?
- What were the effects of name and surname changes among the Vatsonga?

The objectives of the study were:

- To identify the causes of name and surname changes among the Vatsonga.
- To determine the effects of name and surname changes among the Vatsonga.

6.3 SUMMARY

Chapter One outlined the significance of names and what they represent in words. It was stated that the naming practice amongst Africans in general is linked to their social practices. The chapter also highlighted the part the apartheid regime played in changing people's names. Sometimes they would change names because they failed to pronounce them or because they were linked to traditional ways of life. The school system contributed to this practice also in that children could be given Western names without any consultation with their parents.

Chapter Two reviewed the literature, analysing studies by other researchers in the field. This allowed the present researcher to synthesise the information and to align it with the practices of the Vatsonga people, thus enriching the study.

Chapter Three discussed the research design and methodology employed in this study and **Chapter Four** provided the interpretation and analysis of gathered information from the respondents and informants. The chapter also covered the names assimilated and adopted from the various neighbouring cultures. It also gave an insight of the traditional schooling system for both boys and girls, linking these to the practice of naming children or young people once they have attended these schools.

Chapter Five discussed the origin of surnames and finally, **Chapter Six** summarized the study, giving recommendations based on the findings and drawing the conclusion.

6.4 KEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the study were that naming practices in Vatsonga were discussed around the following areas and experiences:

- (a) Schooling systems were dominated by missionaries who thought the naming practices of Vatsonga were based on rituals.
- (b) The non-speakers of the language wrote Xitsonga words, especially names using their own way of writing and not abiding to Xitsonga script as it was known to be written by the native speakers of the language. This resulted in misspelling.
- (c) Adoption of names from other cultures.
- (d) Relocation from one area to the other.
- (e) Assimilation of names and surnames from other cultures.
- (f) Marginalization of the language by both speakers of the language and non-speakers.
- (g) Little education amongst Vatsonga people.

The identified challenges are elucidated in more details hereunder:

6.4.1 Schooling systems were dominated by missionaries who thought the naming practices of Vatsonga were based on rituals

Missionaries were conducting both missionary work and introducing Western education amongst the Vatsonga. In doing so, they changed their mode of attire and naming practices. This was to make them conform to Western ideas of dressing code and how to

name people. The change occurred as the missionaries were convinced that African practices were associated with evil spirits. This is also discussed at length in chapter one.

6.4.2 The non-speakers of the language

As discussed earlier, the non-speakers of the language were not good in the language and therefore could not perform the secretarial tasks they were called to do. This resulted in a number of problems including interpreting and translating. The following is an example:

Misspelt		Correct spelling
<i>Lebese</i>	>	Rivisi
<i>Lekgotso</i>	>	Rikhotso
<i>Baloyi</i>	>	Valoyi

This aspect was dealt with extensively in **Chapter Five**.

6.4.3 Adoption of names from other cultures

Dinga (verb, need) → *dingo* (noun, needy) → *dingani* (need them).

The name is derived from a Zulu king. It means being in need of something desperately. This is associated with Dingaan of the Zulus who was cunning and deceptive leader and who also destroyed British dominance. The one given this name is associated with power, prestige and bravery. The family might be implying that they need more power to defeat their rivals. In our time, the child given this name might have been born on 16 of December which has been selected as Reconciliation Day in South Africa. This is a day when people of all races remember the battles of the past, but celebrate what freedom has given us, which is liberation and peace.

6.4.4 Relocation from one area to another

Relocation as has been indicated earlier is one of the reasons that contributed to name changes. This is the case, for example, of **Makhuvele** and **Sarila** who left their original area and relocated to Bakwena in Hammarskraal. **Sarila** (the crying one) relocated later and when he rejoined his brother they gave him the name **Sarila**, the one who had remained at home and left to cry.

6.4.5 Assimilation of names and surnames from other cultures

Mathebula (2013:11) states that poor political organization amongst the Vatsonga attributed to assimilation into other tribes. Because of lack of proper political structures, Vatsonga were absorbed by other tribes. In this manner they lost their surnames.

6.4.6 Marginalization of the language by both speakers of the language and non-speakers

Some Vatsonga surnames disappeared because the people did not want to use them, especially when houses were being allocated to individuals. Sometimes the Vatsonga found it hard to get houses owing to their surnames. In this way they decided to change their surnames to Nguni surnames so that it could be easier for them to get a house.

As this happened, the originality of family names got lost in the process. This is more like the same thing that happened to Vatsonga people. For example some Vatsonga adopted surnames such as **Mazibuko** and **Masia**. These surnames belonged to Zulus and Basotho who were government functionaries when houses were being allocated along tribal lines.

6.4.7 Little education amongst Vatsonga people

Some of the typical errors seen in the naming practices of the Vatsonga were a result of many of them being illiterate. Other people had to write their names for them and this presented a problem of spelling as discussed earlier.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following this study, the following is recommended:

- The Vatsonga should continue their naming practices, which most of the time follow certain important events. Doing so preserves their culture and personal as well as collective history of the Vatsonga.
- Non-speakers of the language who help in documentation should receive thorough training before they commit themselves to writing in Xitsonga.

- The Vatsonga people themselves should minimize their borrowing of names from sister cultures as Xitsonga is equally rich with principles, values and traditions.
- More work in terms of research is needed to study the naming of personal names amongst Vatsonga people.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The study has highlighted the challenges that were experienced by Vatsonga in terms of naming practices. The study explored how many of the names in Xitsonga came into existence, indicating their origin and meaning. The Vatsonga should rise to the occasion to emancipate their marginalized language.

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